

02-R-0589

A RESOLUTION

BY THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

A RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE APPLICATION BY COOPERATIVE RESOURCE CENTER INC. TO THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDITS TO DEVELOP WESTVIEW CENTER, A 21-UNIT MIXED-INCOME LIVE/WORK COMMUNITY LOCATED AT 1524-1532 & 1537 RALPH DAVID ABERNATHY BOULEVARD; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, Cooperative Resource Center is applying to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for low-income housing tax credits to develop Westview Center, a 21-unit mixed-income live/work community located on Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard; and

WHEREAS, a summary of said application is attached hereto as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, the site of Westview Center is located within census tract 40 which is designated as a community development impact area and is within the geographical boundaries of the West End Livable Community Initiative; and

WHEREAS, census tract 40 is also a GA Dept. of Community Affairs qualified census tract; and

WHEREAS, DCA has established certain regulations whereby low-income housing tax credit applications, to be competitive, must be formally endorsed by the governing authority of the pertinent municipality or county; and

WHEREAS, the City of Atlanta wishes to endorse the aforementioned application by cooperative Resource Center, Inc.;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1: The City of Atlanta hereby endorses the application by Cooperative Resource, Inc., to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for low-income housing tax credits to develop Westview Center Live/Work Community.

WESTVIEW CENTER – A LIVE-WORK DEVELOPMENT – DRAFT (1.7.02)

PROJECT LOCATION

The project is located on two parcels fronting RDA Boulevard in Westview.

Parcel 1: This land lies on the southwest side of RDA Boulevard near the intersection with Ontario Avenue East. It has two parts.

- The first part is currently occupied by vacant and deteriorated retail storefront buildings dating from the 1920's. It does not include the building on the corner of RDA Boulevard and East Ontario, which is currently occupied by a self-serve laundry. These buildings have not been occupied for several years and are now boarded up and secured.
- The second part is a vacant lot that has been previously used for outdoor storage. It is now vacant and fenced.

Parcel 2: This land is located on the northeast side of RDA Boulevard, between an existing duplex dating from the 1920's and an existing commercial building with apartments above, which was rehabilitated about 15 years ago. This parcel is vacant and extends from RDA Boulevard to Inman Street.

DEVELOPER AND OWNERS

The Cooperative Resource Center (CRC) of Atlanta is the project developer and primary owner. The CRC is a developer of high quality, innovative, affordable housing in Atlanta and Georgia in urban to rural locations and for mixed income residents to those with special needs. To date, CRC has developed 21 housing communities in Atlanta and eight Georgia counties with a total of over 1900 owner occupied and rental units.

Two recent projects in Atlanta illustrate the range of CRC's work.

- Ansley North Cooperative is a rehabilitated apartment building located at 1705 Monroe Drive in Midtown Atlanta. It has 49 individually owned cooperative units with 20% of the units reserved for lower income residents.
- Edgewood Center, located at 187 Edgewood Avenue, is a historic building rehabilitated in 1994 for special needs housing oriented to HIV/AIDS residents who are able to live independently. Edgewood Center is a valued neighbor of the current re-birth of Edgewood Avenue properties into residential, office and retail enterprises.

Paul Stange is the current owner of the properties and will be an equity participant in project with CDC. Paul rehabilitated the commercial/apartment building on RDA Boulevard at Inman Street in 1985, and he has continued ownership and management for the past 15 years. The project, which was unique in Atlanta 15 years ago, won a City of Atlanta Urban Design Commission Design Award for commercial rehabilitation and for combining commercial and residential uses in the same building.

ARCHITECTS

The architects are a joint venture of Richard Dagenhart, Architect, and Herman Howard of A.V. Pope and Associates, Architects and Planners. Richard was the architect for the rehabilitation of the buildings on RDA Boulevard and Inman Street. He has been involved in West End for many years, as a board member of the Joel Chandler Harris Association involved in creating the new organization and directing the historic restoration of the Wren's Nest. He has also been involved in development feasibility studies for AUCDC. Herman has been active in West End for the past year, advising the City of Atlanta as part of the Master Planning and Architectural Team for the Livable Communities Initiative. Both Richard and Herman teach at Georgia Tech and they maintain small offices for architecture, urban design and development consulting.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project has four major characteristics:

- It is a live-work development, which means that it has residential living units, small commercial spaces, and the opportunity for future residents to live and work at the same location. Most of the commercial spaces will be designated for office uses, with some space available for retail. The residential units will be one-bedroom units, which meet the market demand in the area.
- It is intended to become part of a larger neighborhood commercial/residential center for the Westview neighborhood on RDA Boulevard, eventually becoming one of the City's new Neighborhood Commercial Zoning Districts. Because it includes both residential and commercial uses, the project will contribute to night and day activity, safety, and maintenance along RDA Boulevard.
- It is designed to fit into the existing commercial district and to fit into the existing single family residential character of the immediately surrounding area along Ontario Avenue and Inman Street. The project will be similar to many other recent loft and live work projects in other Atlanta neighborhoods, including Edgewood Avenue, the Marietta Corridor, Castleberry Hill, and Inman Park, among others.
- It is the first step toward improvements along RDA Boulevard, including attention to storm drainage, traffic calming and control, sidewalk improvements, landscaping and lighting, on-street parking, and elimination of excessive overhead wires and traffic signal cables. These improvements are needed not only for the project area but also for the entire length of RDA Boulevard in Westview.

PROPOSED USES AND AMENITIES

The project will include the following uses and amenities.

Commercial Spaces: Five office and retail storefront spaces on Parcel 1, on the southwest side of RDA Boulevard. This will involve the rehabilitation of the existing storefronts with reduced interior spaces to meet current market demands. The leasable areas will range between 500 and 700 square feet each. These new spaces will be directly across the street from the existing office/retail spaces on the Northeast side of RDA Boulevard.

Residential Spaces: A maximum of 20 to 24 residential spaces. Each residential space will be approximately 600 to 750 square feet, organized as flexible one-bedroom residences with 10 foot ceilings or double height spaces with full kitchens, washer-dryers, storage areas, and designated parking.

- Four loft-like residential spaces in the existing storefront buildings. Two spaces will have their entrances on Ontario Avenue and two will have their entrances onto the parking area on the existing vacant lot.
- Two roof-top residential spaces on top of the existing storefront buildings. These will be unique apartments with terrace spaces overlooking RDA Boulevard.
- Six to eight new loft-like residential spaces in a single building on the present vacant lot on Parcel 1, which is on the southwest side of RDA Boulevard. These spaces will be built above ground level secured parking garages for each tenant.
- Eight to ten new loft like residential spaces in a single building on the vacant lot on Parcel 2, which is on the northeast side of RDA Boulevard. These spaces will also be built above ground level secured parking garages for each tenant.

Community Spaces: Two community spaces will be provided for the residents of the development, including one space for a community meeting room that will be available to the Westview Neighborhood and a multi-use space for exercise equipment, computers with broadband access and other services as needed. There will also be an on-site management office.

Amenities: The development will include amenities for the residents and for the neighborhood, including landscaped outdoor areas, a public roof terrace, and working with the City and DOT and MARTA, improved sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, designated on-street parking, improved traffic controls, and relocated MARTA bus stops.

Parking: The development will provide parking sufficient to serve the project, meeting or exceeding zoning requirements. Residential parking will be designated with all residents having at least one private garage space. Commercial parking will be located on both sides of the street and can overflow, as needed, to on-street parking in the future. At present, there are 12 spaces designated on Parcel 1 on the southwest side of RDA Boulevard, and there are 24 spaces designated on Parcel 2 on the northeast side of RDA Boulevard.

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

The entire site is current zoned C-1, which allows the proposed mix of commercial and residential uses. However, because of the configuration of the parcels and the buffering requirements of Atlanta Zoning Ordinance, minor variances will be required to permit the development to go forward in its present form. These requested variances are as follows:

1. Reduce side and rear buffer requirements between C-1 and residential areas from 20 feet to 10 feet. This variance is necessary to allow required room for on-site parking.
2. Eliminate the C-1 requirement for residential setbacks from adjacent C-1 zoned parcels. This requirement is not necessary for this project, because the residential units face only one direction and may be built on or near the property boundary.
3. Reduce the requirement for total open space and useable open space because of the dimensions and configuration of the parcels, the desire for minimizing building heights, and provisions for parking and driveways

In addition, there is a need for a Special Permit to allow commercial parking required for Parcel 1 to be located, in whole or part, on Parcel 2, which is across the street but well within the required limit of 500 feet from the commercial space.